

**Testimony of Frederick McNulty**  
**In support of HB 5489 *An Act Concerning Secondary School Reform***  
**March 15, 2010**

Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee, I am Fred McNulty from Cheshire, CT and currently a high school student at Loomis Chaffee. I am testifying in support of House Bill 5489, *An Act Concerning Secondary School Reform*. On behalf of my peers and myself I am pleased to see this initiative make its way onto the floor of the legislature.

During both middle school and high school – I attended Chase Collegiate School in Waterbury and Loomis Chaffee in Windsor, respectively – I received some form of health class with comprehensive sex education. These classes, among other things, taught students an array of topics from healthy living to the risks of drug abuse. But, these classes also taught comprehensive sex education, which not only demonstrated abstinence as the best prevention from any negative sexual detractor, but also explained the procedures involved with safe sex. These classes were beneficial to all who took them.

However, I was completely mortified to discover that Connecticut is one of only 14 states that do not mandate that our public schools require one health credit prior to graduation, including comprehensive sex education. Not only would such a measure be overwhelmingly popular – according to Lake Research 83% of Connecticut voters support comprehensive sex education – but, it would save lives. According to the Department of Public Health, over 80,000 Connecticut students have engaged in sexual intercourse. Ideally, for young people, the discussion about sexual health will occur with their families; however the reality is not all parents talk to their kids about these issues.

While issues concerning sexuality in the U.S. have traditionally divided legislatures, I ask that we look past the partisan implications of such a bill, and think of the students. The nonpartisan State of Connecticut, Department of Public Health has released some disturbing reports over the last few years concerning the sexual health of adolescents. In our state, 72% of all reported Chlamydia cases and more than half of all Gonorrhea cases were attributed to young people, aged 10 to 24. Nearly one in every five cases of HIV was attributable to individuals between the ages of 13 to 29. At the same time, 80% of all sexually active students had sex for the first time between the ages of 13 and 16. These facts are not only shocking, but also are deeply troubling.

Therefore, I thus support House Bill 5489, *An Act Concerning Secondary School Reform* because I believe young people have the right to accurate and comprehensive information that can protect their health and save their lives. Young people need information which will give them skills, not only for those who intend to be sexually active, but to give them the expertise to make healthy decisions about their overall health. Access to accurate, complete health information is a human right. Thank you.